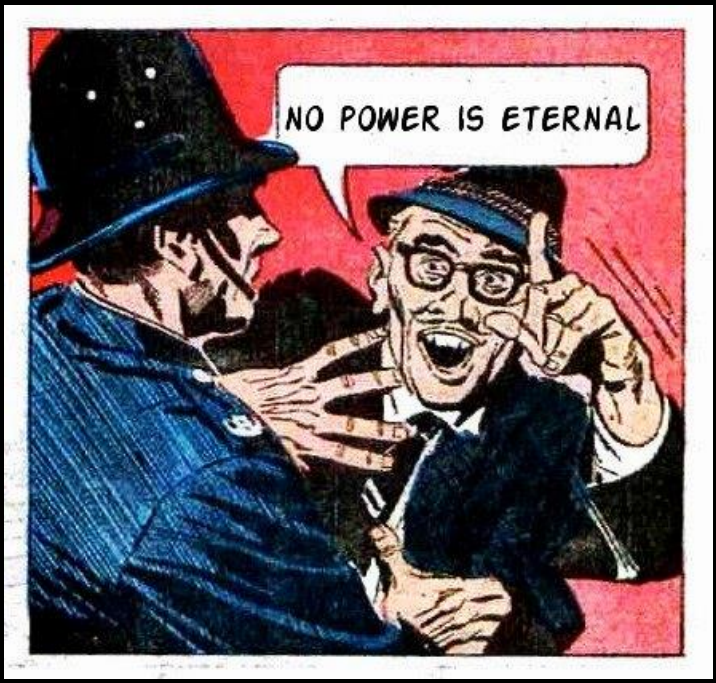


THE SLOW BURNING FUSE

No Power Is Eternal: An Anarchist Reflection on Authority and Resistance

The assertion that no power is eternal is a radical yet profoundly simple truth. Anarchism, in its essence, is a philosophy that challenges the permanence of oppressive systems and advocates for a world free of hierarchy and domination. At its core lies the understanding that power, no matter how entrenched it may seem, is always temporary and subject to change. Recognising this fact can inspire both resistance and the construction of alternative systems rooted in equality and mutual aid.

In this pamphlet, we explore the impermanence of power and the mechanisms that sustain it. We examine how anarchism provides a lens through which to critique authority while fostering hope for liberation. By rejecting the myth of eternal domination, we open the door to imagining and creating new ways of living that prioritise freedom, cooperation, and justice.

The Fragility of Authority

Power structures present themselves as unassailable, projecting an image of permanence to discourage opposition. Governments, economic systems, and social hierarchies claim to be the natural order of things, asserting that their continuation is essential for stability. This narrative is a powerful tool of control, creating a sense of inevitability that stifles resistance.

Yet, these claims are fundamentally false. Power depends on the consent, compliance, and labour of those it governs. When these elements are withdrawn, power is destabilised. Strikes, boycotts, protests, and acts of civil disobedience demonstrate the fragility of authority, showing how collective action can challenge even the most entrenched systems.

The impermanence of power is evident in its reliance on coercion. Systems that must enforce their rules through violence or intimidation are inherently insecure. The more they depend on suppression, the more they reveal their vulnerability. This fragility is a reminder that no matter how dominant power appears, it can always be contested.

Economic Power and Its Contradictions

Economic systems are among the most pervasive forms of power, dictating the distribution of resources and opportunities. Capitalism, in particular, positions itself as a natural and eternal order, claiming to be the ultimate driver of innovation and progress. However, its foundation is riddled with contradictions that undermine its sustainability.

Exploitation and Inequality

Capitalism depends on the exploitation of labour to generate profit. Workers produce far more value than they receive in wages, while the surplus enriches a small elite. This dynamic creates vast inequalities, leading to resentment and unrest. Over time, the growing disparity between wealth and poverty destabilises the system, exposing its unsustainable nature.

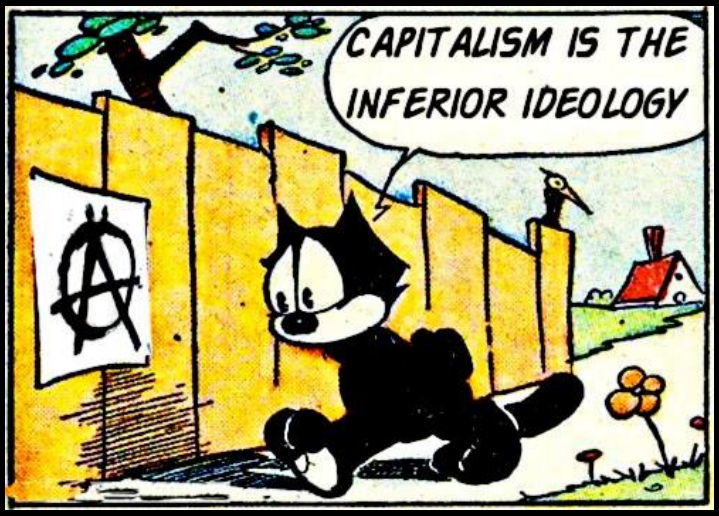
Environmental Limits

The capitalist drive for endless growth is incompatible with the finite resources of the planet. Climate change, deforestation, and pollution are direct consequences of prioritising profit over sustainability. As ecological crises deepen, the legitimacy of capitalism as a viable system comes into question.

Resistance Through Cooperation

Despite its dominance, capitalism is not invincible. Worker cooperatives, mutual aid networks, and

alternative economic models challenge the exploitative logic of the system. These efforts demonstrate that economic systems can be built on principles of fairness and shared prosperity rather than greed and competition.



The State: A System of Control

The state is another powerful institution that claims permanence. It positions itself as the ultimate authority, responsible for maintaining order and protecting its citizens. However, the state is not a neutral entity; it is a hierarchical structure designed to consolidate power and enforce inequality.

Dependency on Force

States maintain control through coercion, employing police, militaries, and surveillance systems to suppress dissent. These tools are framed as necessary for security, but they reveal the state's dependence on force to uphold its authority. A system that cannot rely on genuine consent is inherently unstable.

Legitimacy and Consent

The state derives much of its power from the belief that it is legitimate. This legitimacy is cultivated through propaganda, education, and the illusion of democratic participation. However, when people begin to question the state's authority—whether through mass protests, civil disobedience, or calls for self-governance—its power weakens.

Alternatives to the State

Anarchism envisions a world beyond the state, where communities govern themselves through horizontal decision-making and mutual aid. By rejecting the concentration of power in centralised institutions,

anarchism offers a framework for autonomy and collective responsibility.

WE ANARCHISTS DO NOT DESIRE TO ENRICH OURSELVES. WE DO NOT WANT YOUR MONEY....
WE DON'T WANT PRAISE, OR PAY, OR PRIVILEGE, OR POWER...
WE WANT FOR YOU, FOR OURSELVES, FOR ALL...
FREE ACCESS TO THE MEANS OF LIFE...
...JUSTICE, AND HONESTY. WE WANT HUMANITY WORKING TOGETHER.
WE WANT ORDER

Social Hierarchies: Constructed and Contested

Social hierarchies, including patriarchy, racism, and classism, are systems of power that claim to reflect inherent truths about human nature. These structures enforce inequality by normalising domination, suggesting that certain groups are naturally superior to others.

The Role of Socialisation

These hierarchies persist through social conditioning. From a young age, individuals are taught to accept and reproduce the norms that uphold systems of domination. This process creates cycles of oppression that seem self-perpetuating, but they are, in fact, constructed and can be dismantled.

Resistance Through Solidarity

Movements for social justice challenge the assumptions underpinning these hierarchies, advocating for equity and inclusion. Feminism, anti-racism, and class struggle are interconnected efforts that expose the artificial nature of social divisions and work toward dismantling them.

By building solidarity across differences, these movements demonstrate that a world free from social hierarchies is not only possible but achievable.

The Mechanics of Resistance

Understanding the impermanence of power is essential for effective resistance. Power structures rely on the perception of their invincibility to suppress dissent. Once their vulnerabilities are exposed, opportunities for resistance and transformation emerge.

Disruption of Control

Acts of resistance disrupt the mechanisms of control that power structures rely on. Strikes, protests, and boycotts interrupt the flow of labour, capital, and compliance, forcing systems to confront their reliance on those they oppress.

Building Alternatives

Resistance is not only about tearing down oppressive systems but also about constructing alternatives. Anarchist practices, such as mutual aid, cooperative economies, and horizontal decision-making, provide blueprints for a world without domination. These alternatives challenge the status quo while offering tangible solutions to collective needs.

The Role of Collective Action

Collective action amplifies the power of resistance. When individuals come together in solidarity, they create a force capable of challenging even the most entrenched systems. Mutual aid networks, grassroots organising, and decentralised movements empower people to take control of their lives and communities.

A Vision Beyond Power

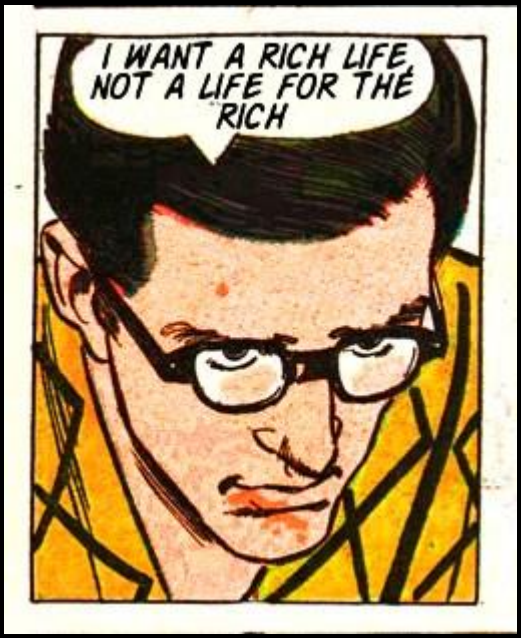
Anarchism is more than a critique of domination; it is a vision for a world beyond power. By rejecting hierarchy and embracing principles of cooperation and autonomy, anarchism offers a path toward liberation.

Mutual Aid and Community Resilience

Mutual aid is a foundational anarchist principle, emphasising cooperation over competition. By meeting collective needs through solidarity, mutual aid fosters resilience and builds the groundwork for broader social transformation.

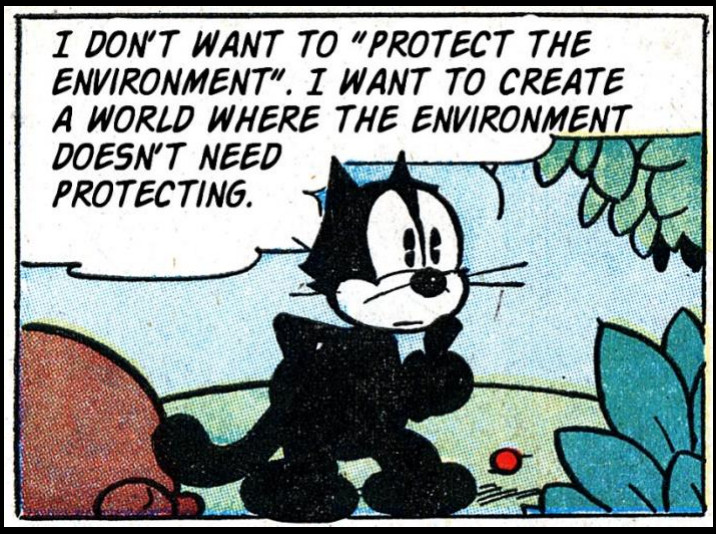
Horizontal Organisation

Anarchism rejects top-down authority, advocating for participatory decision-making and decentralised governance. This approach empowers communities to take collective responsibility, ensuring that power is distributed rather than concentrated.



Environmental Harmony

Anarchist principles align with ecological sustainability, prioritising the health of the planet over the pursuit of profit. By embracing environmental stewardship, anarchists envision a world that respects the interconnectedness of all life.



The Importance of Radical Imagination

Central to anarchism is the idea of radical imagination—the ability to envision alternatives to oppressive systems. This imagination is not a passive exercise but an active process of questioning, experimenting, and creating.

Challenging the Status Quo

Radical imagination challenges the constraints of what is deemed possible. It rejects the narratives that frame domination as inevitable, opening space for new ways of thinking and living.

Experimentation and Adaptation

Building a world beyond power requires experimentation. Anarchists embrace creativity and adaptability, recognising that liberation is an ongoing process that evolves through collective action and shared learning.

Hope in the Face of Power

The recognition that no power is eternal is a source of hope. It reminds us that the systems of oppression we face today are not unchangeable; they are constructs that can be dismantled. By exposing the fragility of authority and building alternatives rooted in solidarity, anarchism empowers us to envision and work toward a freer, more equitable world.

This truth is a call to action. It challenges us to resist resignation, to reject the narratives of inevitability, and to believe in the possibility of change. In affirming the impermanence of power, we affirm the potential of humanity to create a world beyond hierarchy—a world of care, cooperation, and liberation.

Anarchism is not a utopia; it is a practice, a struggle, and a commitment to justice. It is an acknowledgment that freedom is not given but created, not inherited but earned. By embracing this truth, we honour the resilience of those who resist and the enduring hope for a better world.

In rejecting the myth of eternal power, we reclaim our capacity to shape the future. Through solidarity, imagination, and action, we can dismantle systems of domination and build a world rooted in autonomy, equity, and mutual aid. This vision is not a distant dream but a tangible possibility, waiting to be realised through collective effort.

No power is eternal—and that is the foundation of liberation.

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